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EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR CETT CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS:

WHAT SHOULD A GOOD CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK DO?

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A conceptual framework for CETT should be the foundation that guides the implementation of the CETT project. Since CETT is a beginning reading project the framework must be focused on learning to read and write. It should include a formulation of the goals that goes beyond simply learning to read and write, and answer the question, why is it important for children in [CETT Region] to learn to read and write. For example one possible goal might be to "insure that all students develop a solid foundation of beginning reading and writing that will lead to habits of life-long literacy and learning." There are many aspects of reading that are woven together in beginning reading. For the sake of analysis though the framework treats these aspects separately and then attends to how the aspects are integrated in good reading and writing instruction.

These Evaluation Criteria for the CETT conceptual frameworks have two dimensions. The first dimension is Aspects of Reading that include phonemic awareness and word recognition, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. These aspects comprise the rows in the Evaluation Criteria Table below. The second dimension is the teaching and learning dimension that is represented by the CETT project components: theory and applied research foundations, Materials and Strategies, Diagnostic Tools and Assessments, and Teacher Training. The first dimension, Aspects of Reading is content oriented—what must people know and be able to do in order to read. The second dimension, Project Components, is focused on what teachers must know and be able to do in order to teach reading and writing. These two dimensions can be conceptualized as in the following table.

Evaluation Criteria for CETT Conceptual Frameworks

Program Components➤ ---------------- Aspects of Reading⩔	*Theory and Research*	*Materials & Teaching Strategies*	*Assessment*	*Integration*	*Professional Development*
Word identification and production					
Vocabulary development					
Fluency					
Comprehension					
Motivation					

A conceptual framework for the CETT beginning reading and writing projects must speak to each of the cells in the table. That is, it must briefly explain the Theory and Research of each of the aspects of reading, it must provide a brief overview of the types of Materials and Teaching Strategies relevant to each aspect as well as provide a few specific examples of each. It must provide an overview of Diagnostic Tools and Assessment instruments and provide several examples of each. It must indicate how this particular aspect of reading will be integrated with other aspects in sample lessons plans, and it must speak to the strategies that will be used to train classroom teachers in relation to this aspect of reading.

For example consider the cells under Materials and Teaching Strategies. Materials may be characterized on continuum from naturally occurring to constructed; teaching strategies are characterized on a continuum from direct and explicit to indirect and implicit. The parts of the Conceptual Framework related to these cells will give descriptions of materials and strategies and provide one or two examples for clarity. Likewise the other cells of the table will be described in a strong conceptual framework.

A conceptual framework also must be both theoretical and practical. It must have a solid theory or theories at its foundation, and it must also have very concrete examples that demonstrate how the theories are played out in real classrooms where teachers and children are working together as children learn to read and write. For example suppose the theoretical foundation holds that comprehension is a process of connecting "the known to the new". For a brief demonstration of this notion consider the following symbol:

If readers encounter this symbol after reading the words "Jack and Jill . . ." they will probably read this symbol as "went'. If they read it after the words, "They were going to a sporting . . ." They will probably read the symbol as event. Given this notion of comprehension that's shows how previous information such as those contained in the phrases "Jack and Jill" and "They were going to a sporting event" a good framework will spend sometime explaining the theory and research related to comprehension. It will then give some examples of particular materials, such as stories and information articles and show how their comprehension demands connecting the known to the new. It will also give examples of specific teaching strategies, such KWL, Activating Prior Knowledge, Setting Purposes, Advance Organizers, etc that can be used to teach children to make sense of what they read by connecting the known to the new. These descriptions of the aspects of reading must be, as is the notion of connecting the known to the new, grounded in solid theory and grounded in research such as that summarized by the *National Reading Panel Report* and Preventing *Reading Difficulties in Young Children*

As another example consider phonemic awareness and word identification. Word identification can be defined as translating the marks on the page (letters) into pronunciations of words. There are many ways that this process can be learned. Some children growing up in literate environments gradually discover the relationship between sounds and letters by observing and noticing the relationships, by writing notes to others and using the letter names to discover the sounds. For example, it might be the case when a child writes "han" to represent the word "chain". The end of the letter h has the sound,

of /ch/ in chain, /a/ says its name and the sound of /n/ also is present in its letter name. Other children who are not exposed to literate environment, or even are just uninterested in literacy, learn the letter sounds only when they are explicitly and directly taught. Teachers must be able to recognize children's emergent reading and writing behaviors and they must also be able to teach letter-sound relationships directly.

A good framework would provide brief explanations of the theory and research related to phonemic awareness and word identification and examples of teachers supporting emergent reading and writing behaviors and also of teachers directly teaching letter sound relationships and phonemic awareness and word identification. Likewise a good conceptual framework would provide concrete examples of diagnostic tools and assessment practices and instruments that teachers can use to determine what each child needs to learn about word identification. A good framework would also describe how the various aspects of reading and writing can be addressed in integrated activities such as writing a story or reading one, and finally it provide examples of particular strategies that may be used in teacher training. A conceptual framework will provide teachers with models for continuous learning about teaching reading, and it should encourage the development of learning communities where teachers collaborate with one another to constantly improve their teaching.

In evaluating a conceptual framework is adequate, the developers must ask for each aspect:

- Is the aspect addressed clearly explained and defined? Is the relevant theory and empirical research briefly summarized?
- Does the framework include general descriptions and specific examples of material and teaching strategies?
- Are diagnostic tools and assessments well described? Are a few specific examples of the diagnostic tools and assessments included?
- Does the framework provide examples of how each of the aspects of readings are integrated into a weekly lesson planning format for teachers?
- Does the conceptual frame give a general description of strategies to be used in teacher training? Does the framework include some specific examples of these strategies?

While this framework includes those aspects necessary for teaching and learning beginning reading, it is also flexible in that aspects that are specific to particular localities may be added. Likewise it would be possible to add components that are necessary for the successful implementation of CETT in particular localities.

References

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